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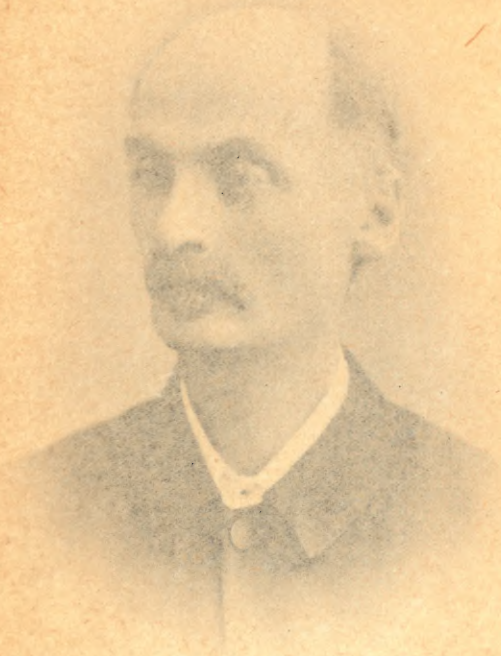
MONUMENT FACTS AND HIGHER CRITICAL FANCIES

A. H. SAYCE, LL.D., D.D.



Yours very faithfully

A. H. Sayce.

MONUMENT FACTS

AND

HIGHER CRITICAL FANCIES

BY

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PREFACE

RECENT archaeological discoveries bearing on the age and authenticity of the Old Testament Scriptures have been so numerous and so unexpected that a brief comparison of them with the results of the so-called 'Higher Criticism' is desirable, especially in view of the controversies which Professor Friedrich Delitzsch's *Babel und Bibel* has excited in Germany. It will be seen that they are not favourable to the 'critical' position. In dealing with them repetitions have sometimes been necessary for the sake of the argument. The words 'criticism,' 'critical' and 'critic' have been printed between inverted commas whenever they refer to the school of sceptical theorists who have arrogated the title of 'critics' to themselves. It is needless to add that I, for one, do not admit their right to do so.

A. H. SAYCE.

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MONUMENT FACTS

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

THE Old Testament is a collection of ancient literary works, and it was written by Orientals. These are two facts which will be admitted by every one, but they are facts, nevertheless, which once admitted, seem to be immediately forgotten. Students and critics, commentators and readers have united in interpreting or criticizing the books of the Old Testament as if they were the production of modern Europeans. Whether the object of the writer has been to defend or to undermine their authenticity and trustworthiness, the same method has been employed, the same point of view adopted, the same principles unconsciously followed. Critic and commentator

have agreed in transforming the old Hebrew authors into men like unto themselves, the representatives of an age of printing, of libraries, and of books of reference, with centuries of European thought and prejudice behind them, and imbued with all the intellectual and spiritual prepossessions of a European race.

We cannot, however, understand the literature of the Orient aright without becoming Orientals ourselves, or interpret the history of the past without divesting ourselves as it were of our modern dress. It is not what we think ought to have happened which has really happened in the ancient East, nor has the history of it been recorded in the manner that seems to us most natural and fit.

There is only one way in which our studies are likely to end in true results, and that is by excluding from them as far as possible what the Germans would call 'the subjective element.' As in natural science, so, too, in the study of the Old Testament, what we want are not theories, however ingenious, but facts. It is true that a fact necessarily embodies a theory, but if it is really a fact the theory embodied in it is merely secondary and

rests on a foundation of tangible evidence. That the bronze age followed the stone age may indeed involve not only the theory that the bronze and stone implements which characterize them have been made by man, but also that where two strata lie one below the other the uppermost indicates a later period of deposition; but the theories are subordinate to the evidence, and none but a madman would think of disputing them.

It is only where the evidence is imperfect, where more than one conclusion may be drawn from it, that the theoretical side of the fact assumes undue proportions, and renders the fact itself provisional only. With the increase of evidence, and the accumulation of fresh data, the provisional nature of the facts tends to disappear, and the fact itself to stand upon solid ground.

Let us now apply these truisms—for truisms they are—to the ancient history which has been traditionally handed down to us. It is clear that there is only one test of its truthfulness which is scientifically acceptable. That test is contemporaneous evidence. The evidence may be of various kinds; the facts of which it con-

sists may be literary and epigraphical, or of a more or less material nature. The more material they are, indeed, the more certain are the conclusions to be derived from them. Literary evidence may be explained away or misinterpreted, inscriptions may be broken and imperfect, but the evidence of potsherds and forms of art is evidence which, once acquired, is acquired for ever, and constitutes a solid foundation of fact upon which to build. In other words, the more archaeological and the less philological our evidence is, the greater will be its claim to scientific authority.

The reason of this is obvious. It is archaeology and not philology that has to do with history. The study of language and the study of the past history of mankind belong to different departments of thought. We cannot extract history out of grammars and dictionaries, and the attempt to do so has always ended in failure. In the early days of the science of language comparative philologists fancied that they could construct the primitive history of a hypothetical 'Aryan family' upon the fossilized relics of Indo-European speech, but the idyllic picture which they painted of the

'undivided' Aryan community has long since been shattered by anthropology.

For the purposes of history philology can be only accidentally of service, only in so far as it throws light on the meaning of a literary record or assists in the decipherment of an ancient inscription. It is the linguistic sense of the record, and not the history it embodies or the historical facts to be drawn from it, with which alone philology is properly concerned. We must not go to it for dates or for the history of the development of civilization and culture.

Still less can we look for help to what has been called 'literary tact.' 'Literary tact' is but another name for a purely subjective impression, and the subjective impressions of a modern European in regard to ancient Oriental history are not likely to be of value. It is quite certain that an ancient Oriental author would not have written as we should write, or as we should have expected him to write; and consequently the very fact that an ancient Oriental document does not conform to our modern canons of criticism is an argument in favour of its genuineness. A document written in accordance with the critical require-

ments of a German professor can never have come to us from the ancient East.

In the eyes, therefore, of inductive science there is only one admissible test of the authenticity and trustworthiness of an ancient record, and that is an archaeological test. So far as the historical side of the question is concerned the philologist pure and simple is ruled out of court. It is the archaeological evidence of Egyptology or Assyriology, and not the philological evidence, which can alone be applied to the settlement of historical disputes.

This fact is often forgotten, and it is assumed that every Egyptologist or Assyriologist is equally a judge of historical questions. But there are students of Egyptian and Assyrian who have devoted themselves only to the philological side of their subject; and where archaeology is involved the opinion of such students is consequently just as valueless as that of any other philologist in other fields of research. Doubtless wherever literature or inscriptions are involved philology supplies part of the material of an archaeological fact; the question, for example, as to the existence of the name of a god Yahum or Yahweh in

Babylonian contracts of the age of Abraham, is primarily a philological one; but the appreciation and historical application of the fact—if fact it be—falls within the province of archaeology.

So, too, it is for philology to decide upon the meaning of a passage in an ancient inscription; the historical bearing and date of the passage must be determined by archaeology.

Of recent years, however, criticism has endeavoured to bolster up the weakness of the philological method by an appeal to the doctrine of evolution. But again, as in the case of 'literary tact,' the appeal is to subjective impressions and beliefs rather than to scientifically established facts. That evolution has been a potent factor in the history of man no sane thinker will deny; the precise line along which it has moved, still more the line along which it ought to have moved, is a totally different matter.

In many instances the process of evolution is clear, the links of the chain are practically preserved, and we can point out the orderly sequence in which they have succeeded one to the other. But in many instances this is

impossible; fragments only of the chain have come down to us, and we have to supply the missing links as best we may. Sometimes we can do so with certainty; at other times our hypothetical chain is a possibility only.

But in all such cases the existence of some, at any rate, of the links is presupposed. The facts are there; all we have to do is to connect them together. Where art or archaéology informs us which is the earlier and which the later link, it is not difficult to bind them into a single chain. But as soon as we leave the sure ground of material facts and phenomena we pass into a region of purely subjective speculation.

That there is evolution in the world of thought and ideas as well as in the world of material objects is undeniable, but to trace the evolution generally needs more knowledge than we possess. Dr. Newman's epoch-making book on *The Development of Christian Doctrine* convinced its readers that there is such a thing as development in dogma; when it went on to assert that the development must have taken place in a particular direction, those only were persuaded who were already disposed to be so.

When we are told that the development of religious ideas in Israel or elsewhere must have followed certain lines, we need only point to the recent archaeological discoveries which have shattered similarly subjective theories of development in Egypt and the early Greek world. Unsupported by the archaeological facts which indicate what is older and what is later in the process of development, all theories about the evolution of ideas, whether religious or otherwise, are absolutely valueless. There is no single line of growth along which they must necessarily have moved, and, apart from the archaeological evidence, we can no more say that a particular phase of faith or thought has been evolved out of another than, apart from physiology, we can say that a particular form of life has a special ancestry. So far as the criticism of ancient history or ancient documents is concerned, whatever scientific value there may be in the application to them of the doctrine of evolution is derived from archaeology.

In dealing with the history of the past we are thus confronted with two utterly opposed methods, one objective, the other subjective,

one resting on a basis of verifiable facts, the other on the unsupported and unsupportable assumptions of the modern scholar. The one is the method of archaeology, the other of the so-called 'higher criticism.' Between the two the scientifically trained mind can have no hesitation in choosing.

The value, indeed, of the method of the 'higher criticism' can be easily tested. We may know the tree by its fruits, and nowhere is this truer than in the domain of science. There is a very simple test which can be applied to the pretensions of the 'higher critic.' More than once I have challenged the advocates of the 'critical method' to meet it, but the challenge has never been accepted.

In both England and France books have been published of late years which we know to have been the joint work of more than one writer. The novels of Besant and Rice and of Erckmann and Chatrian are familiar instances in point. They are written in languages which are both living, which embrace vast literatures, and with which we believe ourselves to be thoroughly acquainted. And yet there is no Englishman who would undertake to say where

Besant ends and Rice begins in the novels which they wrote together, and no Frenchman who would venture to do so in the case of the two French novelists.

How then is it possible for the European scholar of to-day to analyse an old Hebrew book into its component parts, to lay down with mathematical accuracy what section of the same verse belongs to one writer, what to a second, and what to a third, and even to fix the relative dates of these hypothetical authors? Hebrew is a language that is very imperfectly known; it has long ceased to be spoken; only a fragment of its literature has come down to us, and that often in a corrupt state; and the meaning of many of the words which have survived, and even of the grammatical forms, is uncertain and disputed. In fact, it is just this fragmentary and imperfect knowledge of the language which has made the work and results of the higher criticism possible. The 'critical' analysis of the Pentateuch is but a measure of our ignorance and the limitations of our knowledge. What is impossible in the case of modern English or French novels must be still less possible in the case of the Old Testament

Scriptures. With fuller knowledge would come a recognition of the futility of the task.

But there is yet another test to which we can subject the results of the 'critical' school. There are cases in which recent archaeological discovery has enabled us to put them to the proof. The most striking of these is the account of the Deluge contained in the Book of Genesis. Here, if anywhere, we should seem to be justified in inferring the existence of a composite narrative, in which at least two stories of the Flood have been mixed or combined together. But it so happens that a Babylonian story of the Flood, which goes back in its present form to the age of Abraham, has been preserved in the Chaldean epic of Gilgames. When we compare this story with the account in Genesis, we find that it agrees not only with the so-called Elohistic version, but with the so-called Yahvistic version as well.

It thus presupposes an account of the Deluge in which the 'Elohistic' and 'Yahvistic' elements were already combined together. And since it was written some centuries before the birth of Moses, there are only two ways of accounting for the fact, if the narrative in

Genesis is really a composite one. Either the Babylonian poet had before him the present text of Genesis, or else the 'Elohist' and 'Yahvist' must have copied the Babylonian story on the mutual understanding that the one should insert what the other omitted. There is no third alternative.

It follows from all this that the 'critical' method is scientifically unsound, and its results accordingly will not stand the application of a scientific test. It is quite as much an artificial creation as was the Ptolemaic system of the universe, and like the latter requires for its support an ever-increasing number of fresh hypotheses and complicated qualifications. With its disappearance will disappear also the historical conclusions that have been derived from it.

The varying dates assigned to the hypothetical authors of the Pentateuch, the successive strata of religious belief and custom supposed to be discoverable in it, the denial of the historical character of the narratives it contains, must all alike go with the foundation of sand upon which they have been built. An edifice reared on the subjective fancies and assumptions

of the modern European scholar is necessarily a house of cards.

If we are to refuse credit to the narratives of the Old Testament, it must be for some other reason than a belief that we can analyze its documents into their component elements, can fix the age and object of each, and can be sure that ancient Oriental thought must have developed in one particular fashion and in no other. There is only one kind of evidence which can be admitted for or against the history that has been handed down to us, and that is the evidence of archaeological facts. If they support it, we can safely disregard the speculations of the 'higher critic'; if their testimony is adverse, we have something more substantial to go upon than 'literary tact' or a Massoretic counting of words.

In default of facts 'criticism' has been fond of appealing, in support of its negative conclusions, to the absence of documentary evidence. The story of the campaign of the King of Elam and his allies against the Canaanitish princes, we have been told, must be pure myth or fiction, since there was no record of Babylonian expeditions into Palestine in the patriarchal age.

But 'the argument from silence' is essentially unscientific. To make our own ignorance the measure of historical credibility is to adopt the subjective method in an extreme form. If there is one fact which above all others physical science is constantly impressing upon us, it is how little we know of the material universe wherein we live; and the same lesson is taught by archaeology in regard to the history of the past. Time after time the most positive assertions of a sceptical criticism have been disproved by archaeological discovery, events and personages that were confidently pronounced to be mythical have been shown to be historical, and the older writers have turned out to have been better acquainted with what they were describing than the modern critic who has flouted them.

As we shall see, the campaign of Chedorlaomer and his allies has proved to be no myth or fiction, but sober fact; the very names of the kings who took part in it have been recovered, and we now know that the political situation presupposed by the narrative corresponds exactly with the actual requirements of history. It was the critic who was mistaken, and not the writer in Genesis.

Hardly half a dozen years ago the 'critic' assured us that Menes, the founder of the united kingdom of Egypt, and his immediate successors of the First Dynasty were the creations of etymological invention, 'semi-fabulous' personages, belonging to a 'prehistoric' period, of which no record could ever have existed. The spade of the excavator has rudely dissipated all such dreams. So far from being 'semi-fabulous' and 'mythical' the kings of the First Dynasty of Egypt turn out to have lived in the full blaze of culture and history, at a time when the civilization of Egypt was already old, when its art was highly advanced and its political organization complete. The hieroglyphic system of writing was already perfected; an alphabet had been formed out of it, and even a cursive hand developed. A careful chronological register was kept, and, as in Babylonia, the events of each year were officially recorded. Even the tombs of the 'semi-fabulous' beings of the critic's imagination have been discovered, and the bones of Menes himself are now in the Museum of Cairo.

If we turn to Babylonia, the same story awaits us there. There, too, we were told that

Sargon of Akkad and his son Naram-Sin were creatures of myth, and that the description of their campaigns in Syria and Canaan, and of the empire they established in Western Asia was altogether 'unhistorical.' But once more the excavator has been at work; the monuments of Sargon and Naram-Sin have been found, and written tablets have been disinterred dated in the years when Syria, 'the land of the Amorites,' was conquered. Wherever archaeology has been able to test the negative conclusions of criticism, they have dissolved like a bubble into the air.

The criticism of the Old Testament, which has ended in negation and preferred the results of its own subjective theorizing to the external testimony of tradition, had a twofold basis. It started on the one hand from Wolf's assumption that the use of writing for literary purposes was unknown before the classical period of Greek history, and on the other hand from Astruc's inference that the employment of different names for the Deity in the Book of Genesis indicated diversity of authorship.

It was in 1795 that Wolf's *Prolegomena* to Homer was published, and the foundations laid

for that critical separation of ancient books into their hypothetical elements which has since become such a favourite pastime in Germany. It was obvious that neither the text nor the contents of a literature which had been handed down orally and not committed to writing could lay any great claim to accuracy, and it was probable that the tradition which assigned it to a single author was merely a popular illusion. If writing was practically unknown before the age of Peisistratus and Solon in Greece, tradition might safely be thrown aside, and a wide field was opened for the labours and theories of the critic.

The *Conjectures sur la Genèse* of Jean Astruc, the French Protestant physician, were published anonymously in Paris in 1753. Astruc himself did not dispute the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. But he maintained that the use of Elohim in some passages of Genesis and that of Yahveh (Jehovah) in others pointed to a duality of sources, and that the book must have been written by Moses in four parallel columns, which were afterwards mixed together by ignorant copyists.

This second theory was soon abandoned, if indeed it had ever been adopted by other

students, but the first theory shared a different fate. The existence of two names for God is a fact which, once pointed out, cannot be gainsaid, and Astruc's explanation of it became for 'criticism' the only one. It was assumed that a difference in the use of the Divine Name must imply a difference in authorship; and when to this was added the further assumption of the late introduction of the art of writing, the future march of criticism was assured. Tradition, even the best attested, had to make way before it, theory was piled upon theory, and a time came at last when hardly any fragment of ancient literature had escaped the knife of the critical dissector, and the whole of ancient history, as it had been handed down to us before the age of Cyrus or the capture of Rome by the Gauls, was wiped out with a sponge.

CHAPTER II

THE ANTIQUITY OF LITERATURE

FOR more than half a century after the publication of Wolf's *Prolegomena* the assumption of the late use of writing for literary purposes was one which no one who pretended to critical scholarship ventured to dispute. Among the Greeks, it was assumed, it did not go back beyond the sixth century before our era; among the Hebrews only the more conservative critics allowed that it might have been known in the age of Solomon. But even this concession was not universally admitted, and Biblical criticism ended by denying the pre-exilic origin of the larger part of the Old Testament literature. The early Israelites could not read or write; how then could a mature literature such as we find in the Old Testament have come into existence at an early date?

But this supposed late use of writing for literary purposes was merely an assumption,

with nothing more solid to rest upon than the critic's own theories and prepossessions. And as soon as it could be tested by solid fact it crumbled into dust. First Egyptology, then Assyriology, showed that the art of writing in the ancient East, so far from being of modern growth, was of vast antiquity, and that the two great powers which divided the civilized world between them were each emphatically a nation of scribes and readers. Centuries before Abraham was born Egypt and Babylonia were alike full of schools and libraries, of teachers and pupils, of poets and prose-writers, and of the literary works which they had composed.

Egyptian literature goes back almost to the earliest period of its history. From the days of the founder of the First Dynasty onwards the events of each year of the king's reign were recorded in writing. Notes written in a cursive hand have been found in the tombs of the First Dynasty, and some of the chapters in the Book of the Dead—the Prayer-book of the ancient Egyptians—are older than King Menes himself. The tombs and other monuments of the Fourth Dynasty show that a knowledge of writing was already as widely spread as it was in the later

days of Egyptian history, and the walls of the pyramids of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties are covered with ritual texts which had been handed down from a remote antiquity.

The Proverbs of Ptah-hotep, written in the time of the Fifth Dynasty, remained an Egyptian classic, and we may gather from them that education was generally diffused among the people. Indeed, if Virey's translation can be trusted, a sort of competitive examination was already known[1]. At any rate the style of the book belongs to an advanced period of literary culture. It aims at attracting notice by its terseness and complicated turns, and by its departure from the language at once of ordinary life and of current literature.

The Proverbs of Ptah-hotep, in fact, though written more than five thousand years ago, represent the close of a period in the history of Egyptian literature. They had been preceded by earlier books, many of which survived to a later day. One of them has come down to

[1] 'Let (the pupil) win success by placing himself in the first rank; that is for him a position proper and durable, and he has nothing (further) to desire for ever.' *Records of the Past*, new series, III, p. 31 (1890).

ourselves in a mutilated form. It is a moral treatise, the work of a certain Qaqemna, who lived in the remote age of the Third Dynasty. But even then there were already schools and libraries in Egypt stored with papyrus books written in a running hand.

Egypt continued to be a literary country through all the vicissitudes of its political fortunes. It was emphatically a land of readers and scribes. The passing traveller scratched his name upon the rocks, and the smaller objects of every-day life were inscribed. The articles of toilet that were made for the Egyptian lady had appropriate inscriptions carved or painted upon them, and even the objects that lay hidden away in the darkness of the tomb were covered with written characters.

Not only the professional scribes, but every one who pretended to be a gentleman was required to be educated. The man of business, the wealthier fellahîn, even the overseers of the workmen, were expected to be acquainted with the hieroglyphic system of writing and the hieratic or cursive hand which had developed out of it. The dead man himself could not pass in safety through the perils that sur-

rounded him on his entrance into the other world, unless he could read the inscriptions on the walls of his sepulchre or the ritual of the dead which was buried with him.

And the literature with which the libraries of Egypt were stocked was of the most varied character. Even the historical novel was represented in it, as well as political satires and books of travel. One of the most popular books written in the reign of the Pharaoh of the Oppression is a sarcastic account of the adventures of an Egyptian official in Palestine. No one, in short, could live in Egypt without coming under the spell of its literary culture. Written characters literally stared him in the face on every side, and all who were in any way connected with the government were obliged to read and understand them.

The literary culture of Egypt has its parallel in Babylonia. There too we find a land of books and schools and libraries and a nation of readers and writers. Babylonia was a great commercial community, and for the purposes of trade a knowledge of reading and writing was required among all classes who took part in it. From a remote antiquity not only schools but

libraries as well had been established in the numerous cities of the country, and as in Egypt, so too in Babylonia, the literature represented in them was of the most varied description.

The cuneiform characters of Babylonia were far more difficult to learn than the hieroglyphs of Egypt. They were, in fact, a hieratic or cursive hand developed at an early date out of hieroglyphs of which but few traces have come down to us. There was consequently nothing in their forms to assist the memory, any more than there is in the form of Chinese characters to-day. Moreover, they had been the invention of a people who spoke an agglutinative language, like that of the Turks or Finns, and who had been subsequently supplanted by Semites. When accordingly the Semites adopted and adapted the old writing of the country along with the rest of its civilization they found it necessary to learn the language which the writing embodied. There was already a large literature composed in it, and even after the Semitic occupation it long remained the language of those two conservative branches of study, law and religion.

Babylonian education thus included not only a knowledge of the complicated cuneiform signs, but also of the language of the older Sumerian population. Sumerian became to the Semitic Babylonian what Latin was to the mediaeval European, the foundation and background of his literary education, the language of religion and law, and even of a part of the literature which he was required to know.

What years of patient labour all this implies may easily be conceived. An old Sumerian proverb, used as a text for a copybook, declared that 'he who would live in the school of the scribes must rise like the sun,' and the exercise books of Babylonian learners who lived before Abraham was born have recently been found by the American excavators at Nippur in Northern Babylonia. The pupil was first taught how to form his characters, then he committed them to memory from lists in which they were arranged according to their forms. For the acquisition of Sumerian he had grammars and dictionaries, vocabularies, phrase-books and interlinear translations, as well as grammatical analyses and explanations of difficult passages.

But even with all this the young Babylonian had far greater difficulties to contend against than the young Englishman of to-day with his simple alphabet of twenty-six letters, but they were difficulties which had to be overcome before he could even read the deed in which he leased his house or bought his wool. That education should nevertheless have been so widely diffused in Babylonia as we now know it to have been, women as well as men sharing in it, is a truly astonishing fact. The Babylonia of the age of Abraham was a more highly educated country than the England of George III.

'Criticism' so-called met the great fact of the advanced literary culture of ancient Egypt and Babylonia by either ignoring or minimizing or denying it altogether. As late as 1862, Sir George Cornewall Lewis denied it[1], and as late

[1] *An Historical Survey of the Astronomy of the Ancients:* 'Whoever calmly considers the long possession of Egypt by the two most civilized nations of antiquity, while the sacred language and writing of the ancient Egyptians were still perpetuated by an unbroken tradition, will be slow to believe that these supposed treasures, if they really existed, could have remained untouched, or that they would have been left to be opened by the laborious investigation of modern

as 1871 the eminent Semitic scholar Professor Nöldeke declared that the results of Assyriology in both linguistic and historical matters had 'a highly suspicious air.' It was subjective theory against objective fact, and in accordance with the usual 'critical' method fact had to give way to theory.

But facts are stubborn things, and gradually the accumulation of them forced an unwilling and half-hearted assent from the disciples of the 'critical method.' At last, in 1887, came a discovery which revolutionized our conceptions of ancient Oriental history, and made the assumption of ancient Oriental illiteracy henceforth an impossibility. This was the

archaeologists, more than 1,500 years after the key of this secret had been lost. . . . The future discoveries of the Egyptologists will be attended with results as worthless and as uncertain as those which have hitherto attended their ill-requited and barren labours' (pp. 395–396). 'It must not be assumed that any authentic memorials of the early Assyrian history were in existence when Herodotus and Ctesias collected their information. Oral tradition would not have carried them back with safety for much more than a century; and we have no reason to suppose that any contemporary chronicles or registers, of a historical nature, had been composed and preserved' (pp. 432–433). So much for the value of literary 'criticism'!

discovery of the cuneiform tablets of Tel el-Amarna.

Tel el-Amarna marks the site of a city which stood on the eastern bank of the Nile, midway between the modern towns of Minia and Assiût. It was built by Amon-hotep IV, one of the last kings of the Eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty. Born of an Asiatic mother, and himself a philosopher and visionary, he endeavoured to reform, or rather to abolish, the state religion of Egypt, of which he was himself the official head, and to replace the worship of Amon of Thebes by a sort of pantheistic monotheism. For Amon-hotep there was but one God, the creator and upholder of all things, and in whom all things exist. Omnipresent, omniscient, and all-good, the visible symbol of this one God was the solar disk.

But the reforming efforts of the Pharaoh met with fierce opposition, and in spite of persecution the followers of Amon succeeded in holding their own against 'the heretic king.' He retired northwards from Thebes, the capital of his fathers, and founded a new capital where the mounds of Tel el-Amarna now line the river bank. Here he erected a temple for his

God and a palace for himself, and here he died surrounded by the adherents of the new faith, and the foreigners from Canaan and other parts of Western Asia, to whom he had entrusted the higher offices of state.

When he died religious and civil war was breaking out throughout the land. It was not long before the national party were triumphant; the city of the heretic Pharaoh, with the temple and palace, was razed to the ground, and the mummy of the Pharaoh itself dragged from its sepulchre and torn into fragments. The city of Khu-n-Aten, 'the glory of the Solar Disk,' as the Pharaoh had renamed himself, lasted hardly more than thirty years.

But while it lasted the Egyptian Foreign Office was transferred to it from Thebes, and an active correspondence carried on with the Egyptian governors and vassal princes in the subject provinces of Canaan and Syria, as well as with the kings of Babylonia, Assyria, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. It is this correspondence, including the letters and other documents which had been brought from Thebes, which was discovered in 1887.

The most astonishing and unexpected fact

about this correspondence is, that it is in the cuneiform script of Babylonia and for the most part in the Babylonian language. It proves that the Babylonian language was to such an extent the language of diplomacy and international intercourse that even the Egyptian court had to use it when corresponding with its Asiatic provinces. It also proves that the culture and political ascendency of Babylonia had exercised so long and so permanent an influence upon Western Asia as to impose upon it the language and syllabary of the dominant state. Throughout Western Asia there must have been schools and libraries like those of Babylonia itself, in which the literature of Babylonia was studied, and its language and system of writing taught and learned.

The correspondence further shows that letters, in what to most of the writers was a foreign tongue and script, were constantly passing backwards and forwards along the high-roads of trade and war. The subjects of them were often trivial; and some of them were written by Bedouin chiefs as well as by women. The writers, in learning the Baby-

lonian script and language, had at the same time to acquire a knowledge of Babylonian literature. Among the clay tablets found at Tel el-Amarna are fragments of mythological poems in which the words have been divided from one another in order to assist the learner, and the legal code of Khammu-rabi recently discovered makes it clear that Babylonian law also was known in the West.

The Mosaic age, therefore, instead of being an illiterate one, was an age of high literary activity and education throughout the civilized East. Not only was there a wide-spread literary culture in both Egypt and Babylonia which had its roots in a remote past, but this culture was shared by Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, and more especially by Syria and Palestine.

Palestine, in fact, was the meeting-place of the two great powers of the Oriental world, and had long been under the influence of the streams of literary culture which flowed from them. The influence of Babylonian culture must have been felt in it at least as early as the era of Sargon of Akkad, who incorporated it into his empire centuries before

the birth of Abraham; the recent excavations at Gezer have shown that monuments inscribed with Egyptian hieroglyphs were erected on its soil in the period of the Twelfth Dynasty.

But this is not all. Thanks to the discoveries of Dr. A. J. Evans and others in Krete, we now know that long before the age of Moses there was an advanced literary culture in what was to be in after days the Greek world, and that the hieroglyphs of Egypt and the cuneiform characters of Babylonia were not the only systems of writing which were in vogue. In Krete itself there were three, if not four, wholly different systems, one consisting of pictographs, the others of linear characters which represented syllables.

One of these latter systems was widely used. Inscriptions in it have been found in the island of Melos as well as at Mykenae and Orchomenos in Greece; some of its characters are impressed on the Amoritish potsherds disinterred at Lachish in Palestine; and the syllabary of Cyprus, inscriptions in which have been discovered at Troy and in Jerusalem, was but a local form of it. In the 'Palace of Minos' at Knossos hundreds of clay tablets

have been disinterred, the majority of which are older than the Mosaic age, and all alike are covered with the characters of this still undeciphered script. From one end of the civilized ancient world to the other men and women were reading and writing and corresponding with one another; schools abounded and great libraries were formed, in an age which the 'critic' only a few years ago dogmatically declared was almost wholly illiterate.

The second assumption, then, upon which the method and results of the 'higher criticism' rest has been disproved by archaeological research. Moses not only could have written the Pentateuch, but it would have been little short of a miracle had he not been a scribe. He had been brought up in the Pharaoh's court, he was a law-giver, and the elders and overseers of his brother Israelites in the land of Goshen would have been required to know how to read and write. Egypt, where the Israelites dwelt so long and from which they fled, was a land of writing and literature, and the Canaan which they invaded was even more so. For here three literary cultures met, as it were, together—the culture and script of Egypt, the

culture and script of Babylonia, and the culture and script of the Philistines from Krete.

The very potters scratched written characters, and sometimes words or names, not only on the pottery of Egypt but upon that of Canaan and of Melos. In Palestine the handles of the jars were impressed with the hieroglyphic legends of inscribed scarabs, just as they were at Tel el-Amarna in Egypt. The civilized world was a world of books, and a knowledge of writing extended even to the classes of the population who were engaged in manual labour.

Professor Ramsay has drawn attention to the contrast between the Latin Crusaders in Asia Minor, who have left no written records behind them because they could neither read nor write, and the Greek and Carian mercenaries of the Pharaoh Psammetichus, who employed their leisure at Abu Simbel in covering its stone colossi with inscriptions at a time when, according to Wolf's hypothesis, the Greek world was still illiterate. We have learnt many things of late years from archaeology, but its chiefest lesson has been that the age of Moses, and even the age of Abraham, was almost as literary an age as our own.

CHAPTER III

THE DISSECTION OF THE PENTATEUCH

THE historian is necessarily a compiler. He has to gather his materials from all sides, and in so far as they are literary his work must be to a certain extent a literary compilation. The author of the Books of Kings tells us what some of the sources were from which his narrative has been derived; they were the book of the Acts of Solomon, and the official Annals of the Kings of Judah and Israel. Other contemporaneous sources are named by the chronicler—the book of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah, the Visions and Commentary of Iddo the seer, the Genealogies of Shemaiah and Iddo, the History of Jehu the son of Hanani, 'who is mentioned in the book of the Kings of Israel,' and the Vision of Isaiah.

Extracts from similar sources can be detected even in the Pentateuch; the list of the kings of Edom, for example, given in the thirty-sixth

chapter of Genesis, must have been taken from the state annals of the country, and the itinerary of the Israelites in the thirty-third chapter of Numbers implies an official and contemporaneous record. As we shall see, the account of the campaign of Chedor-laomer and his allies which we find in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis must have been derived from a Babylonian document.

But because the historian is a compiler it does not follow that he is a divided personality. Herodotus has embodied in his history numerous quotations and extracts from his predecessors, but for all that he was a single individual, and not a collection of different writers living at different periods of Greek history whom tradition has comprehended under one name. Printing has made us so familiar with footnote references and marks of quotation that we fail to realize how difficult it was for an ancient author to indicate exactly where he himself was speaking and where he was borrowing from others. The fear of plagiarism was not before his eyes so constantly as it is before the eyes of those who live in an age of printing-presses and reviewers.

There are, nevertheless, modern books which

illustrate the method of the ancients. Little more than half a century ago, for instance, Bayle St. John wrote an account of his visit to Egypt, in which he incorporated long extracts from the works of other travellers without adding marks of quotation, or indeed anything that would enable the reader to distinguish between his own narrative and that of earlier writers. Had such a book been included in the Old Testament Canon, and the older books from which it has been borrowed been known, the 'critic' would have triumphantly pointed to it as an indisputable example of composite authorship. And yet it is really the work of a single author, and the greater part of it is devoted to the story of his own individual experiences.

Archaeology has furnished us with the means of actually testing the value of the 'critical' theory regarding the composition of the Pentateuch. If there is any portion of it in which the supposed fact of divided authorship seems clearest, it is the narrative of the Deluge. Here, if anywhere, we seem to have evidence of a double version of the story, the two sections of which can be distinguished from one another, and which appear to be characterized not only by

a different phraseology but by a different account of the catastrophe as well. And yet, as has already been said, the Babylonian story of the event goes to show that such evidence is merely illusive. The twofold description of the Flood in Genesis is like the twofold text which, it has been proved, is discoverable in some of the works of Dean Stanley when the 'critical method' is applied to them [1].

The Babylonian story in its most complete form is contained in the great Chaldean epic of Gilgames. It there occupies the larger portion of the eleventh book, and is represented as being told to the Babylonian hero by Xisuthros, the Babylonian Noah, himself. As the epic was composed in the age of Abraham, the episode of the Deluge which has thus been introduced into it must go back to at least as early a date.

Now when we compare the Babylonian story with the account in Genesis we find that it does not agree with only one or other of the two versions which criticism has discovered and distinguished in the Biblical narrative, but with both. Like the 'Elohist' it makes Xisuthros

[1] J. Carmichael, *How Two Documents may be found in One* (Montreal, 1895).

the tenth in descent from the first man, it ascribes the Flood to the sins of mankind, and the preservation of Xisuthros to his piety; it asserts that all living things were destroyed except such as had found shelter in the ark; it states that the approach of the catastrophe was revealed to Xisuthros by the god Ea, who instructed him how to build the ark, which was divided into rooms and storeys, provided with a window, and pitched within and without; it tells us that 'the seed of life of all kinds' was taken into the vessel, along with the family of Xisuthros, and that the waters covered 'all the high mountains'; and, finally, that when the Deluge had subsided and Xisuthros had offered a sacrifice on the summit of the mountain, the god Bel blessed him and promised that he would never again destroy the world by a flood, while the goddess Istar 'uplifted' the rainbow, which an old Babylonian hymn calls 'the bow of the Deluge.'

Like the 'Yahvist,' on the other hand, the Babylonian story sees in the Flood a punishment for sin, and makes it destroy all living things which were not in the ark; it describes how Xisuthros sent forth three birds, the swallow,

the dove, and the raven, to discover if the waters had subsided from the earth, and that, while the dove turned back to the ark, the raven flew away; and it states that after the descent from the vessel Xisuthros built an altar, and offered sacrifice on the peak of the mountain where it had rested, and where the gods 'smelt the sweet savour' of the offering.

The three birds of the Babylonian story explain why it is that in the Biblical version the dove is mentioned twice, though commentators long ago suspected that three birds must originally have been named. Nor is this all. The Biblical writer must have had the Babylonian version before him—if not in its literary form, at all events in some shape or other—for he has deliberately excluded and implicitly contradicted the polytheistic elements contained in it. The swallow is omitted because its name, 'the bird of destiny,' brought with it superstitious and idolatrous associations; the Deluge is not the work of one god, Bel, and the preservation of Xisuthros the work of another, Ea, as the Babylonian account averred, but the punishment of mankind and the revelation of the coming catastrophe to the righteous man

are alike due to the One God, whether He be addressed as Elohim or as Yahveh; while the statement of the Babylonian poet that the door of the ark was shut by Xisuthros himself is directly negatived by the Biblical writer, who asserts that it was that One God who closed it.

If, then, the Babylonian account of the Deluge agrees with the Biblical version *as a whole*, and not with one or other of the component parts into which it has been separated by criticism—and such, as we have seen, is the case—and if, as is also the case, this Babylonian account goes back to an age long anterior to that of Moses, only one conclusion is possible. Even the narrative in which the marks of composite authorship seem clearest is not really composite, at any rate in the sense in which the term is understood by 'criticism.' The other alternative, that the 'Elohistic' and 'Yahvistic' elements already existed in the Babylonian version, is one that no Assyriologist would accept, nor would it assist the 'critical' position, as the Babylonian version had assumed its present form before the Mosaic age.

But we can go yet a step further. When we compare the Biblical with the Babylonian account

of the Flood, we find that its geographical setting has been changed. It is true that the ark is made to rest on one of the mountains of Ararat, but in other respects it has been given a Palestinian colouring. Not only is the name of the rescued patriarch no longer Xisuthros or Utu-napistim but Noah, and the vessel itself has been changed from a ship into an ark. Unlike Babylonia or Egypt, Canaan possessed no great rivers; its population, except in the Phœnician cities of the coast, was essentially inland and unacquainted with the art of ship-building. The sprig of olive brought back by the dove to the ark is another indication of Western influence, for the olive was a tree of Palestine and not of Babylonia. Still more significant is the difference in the chronology and calendar of the two versions. The rainy season of Babylonia was the month Sebet, our January and February, and it was in Sebet, therefore, that the Flood was believed to have taken place. But in Canaan the rainy months were October and November, when the autumn or 'former' rains fall, and March, with the 'latter' rains of spring. In the Book of Genesis, accordingly, 'the fountains of the great deep'

are said to have been broken up and 'the windows of heaven opened' in 'the second month' of the Hebrew year, that is to say, at the end of October, while the subsidence of the waters began in the middle of the seventh month, when the rains of spring would be over.

The conclusion which follows is obvious. Not only does the Babylonian story of the Deluge agree with that of Genesis as a whole, and thus utterly ignore the distinctive elements which criticism has laboured to point out within it; it further shows that the story must have been known and modified in Canaan before it found a place in the Hebrew Scriptures. How this should have been the case we have again learnt from archaeological discovery.

The Tel el-Amarna tablets, which have revealed to us the literary activity and wide-spread education of the Mosaic age, have also shown that Babylonian literature was studied in the schools of Canaan. Even in distant Egypt, in the Foreign Office of the Pharaoh, as we have seen, fragments have been discovered of Babylonian legends, with the words separated from one another for the assistance of the foreign reader. The Babylonian account

of the great catastrophe which had once swept over the civilized earth must have been known in Canaan long before Moses was born. Indeed, it must have been familiar to Abraham himself before he migrated from Ur. In the 'critical' theory of the origin of the Biblical narrative archaeology thus compels us to see only a philological mirage.

CHAPTER IV

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER OF GENESIS AND THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY

IN 1869 the great Semitic scholar, Professor Nöldeke, published a treatise on the 'Unhistorical character of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis'[1]. He declared that 'criticism' had for ever disproved its claim to be historical. The political situation presupposed by it was incredible and impossible; at so distant a date Babylonian armies could not have marched to Canaan, much less could Canaan have been a subject province of Babylonia. The whole story, in fact, was a fiction based upon the Assyrian conquest of Palestine in later days. The names of the princes commemorated in it were etymological inventions; eminent Semitic philologists had already explained those of Chedor-laomer and his allies from Sanskrit, and

[1] *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des alten Testaments*, Abhandlung III, pp. 156–172 (Kiel, 1869), and *Jahrbücher für wissenschaftliche Theologie* (1870), pp. 213 et seq. On the 'Iranian' origin of Babylonian names see Renan, *Histoire générale des Langues sémitiques*, pp. 62–64.

those of the Canaanitish princes were derived from the events in which they were supposed to have borne a part.

This was in 1869. In 1903 'criticism' is discreetly silent about the conclusions which it then announced with so much assurance. In the interval the excavator and archaeologist have been hard at work, regardless of the most certainly ascertained results of 'criticism,' and the ancient world of Western Asia has risen again from the grave of centuries. A history which had seemed lost for ever has been recovered for us, and we can now handle and read the very letters which passed between the contemporaries of Abraham. We now know almost as much, in fact, about the Babylonia of the age of Abraham as we do about the Assyria of the age of Isaiah or about the Greece of the age of Perikles.

And the increase of knowledge has not been favourable to the results of 'criticism.' It has proved them to be nothing but the baseless fabric of subjective imagination. It is the Book of Genesis, and not the works of the modern German critic, whose claim to credence has been vindicated by the discoveries of

archaeology. It is true that the discoveries have been disputed by the 'critic' inch by inch, that first the philological scholarship of the Assyriologist, and then his good faith was questioned, and that now, when at length a grudging assent to undeniable facts has been extorted, we are told that the 'critical position' still remains unaffected. Unaffected! When the foundation upon which it rested is absolutely gone!

We read in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis that 'in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedor-laomer king of Elam, and Tid'al king of Nations (Goyyim); that these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. . . . Twelve years they served Chedor-laomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.' And in the fourteenth year came Chedor-laomer and the kings that were with him, and smote 'the Amorites of Canaan as far south as the later Kadesh-barnea.'

There are several points worthy of notice in this narrative. Though it is dated in the reign of a king of Babylonia, the leader of the

forces, and the suzerain to whom the Canaanitish princes were subject, was a king of Elam. Elam, therefore, must have been the predominant power at the time, and the Babylonian king must have been its vassal. The narrative nevertheless is dated in the reign of the Babylonian king and not in that of the king of Elam, and it is to the reign of the Babylonian king that the events described in it are attached. Babylonia, however, was not a united country; there was another king, Arioch of Ellasar, who divided with Amraphel of Shinar the government of it, and like Amraphel acknowledged the supremacy of Elam. Finally the 'Nations,' whoever they were, were also subject to Elam, as well as the distant province of Canaan.

Now let us turn to the contemporaneous monuments of Babylonia, and see what they have to tell us in regard to the very period to which the Book of Genesis refers. Elam, we find, had conquered Babylonia, and the sovereigns of Babylonia, accordingly, had become the vassals of the Elamite king. Along with the conquest had gone the division of Babylonia into two kingdoms; while Khammurabi or Ammu-rapi was reigning at Babylon—

the Biblical Shinar in the north—Eri-Aku, the son of an Elamite prince, was ruling at Larsa—the Biblical Ellasar—in the south.

Eastward, in the Kurdish mountains, were the Umman Manda or 'Barbarian Nations' of whom Tudghula appears to have been the chief. Canaan had long been, in name, if not always in reality, a Babylonian province, and when Babylonia passed under Elamite domination the Elamite king naturally claimed all the provinces that had been included in the Babylonian empire. Indeed, Eri-Aku of Larsa gives his father Kudur-Nankhundi the title of 'Father' or 'Governor' of the land of the Amorites, the name under which Canaan was known at the time in Babylonia.

Could there be closer agreement between the fragment of old-world history preserved in the Book of Genesis and the revelations of the native monuments? Even the proper names have been handed down in the Scriptural narrative with but little alteration. In the name of Ellasar, indeed, there has been a transposition of letters, but, apart from this, it is only in the name of the king of Shinar or Babylon himself that any serious difference is

observable. Between Khammu-rabi, the usual form of the royal name, and Amraphel the difference is considerable, and long made me doubt whether the two could, after all, be identified together.

But, again, with the increase of knowledge has come a solution of the difficulty. The dynasty to which Khammu-rabi belonged was not of Babylonian origin. It had conquered the north of Babylonia in the troublous times which followed the fall of a dynasty whose capital had been Ur. The kings were of Canaanitish and South Semitic origin, like Abram the Hebrew, and their ancestral deity was Samu or Shem. Though the language spoken by them was Semitic it differed from the language of the Semitic Babylonians, who found some of the sounds which characterized it difficult to pronounce.

Hence the Babylonian scribes did not always represent them in the same way, and the same royal name appears under different forms in different documents. The first element in the name of Khammu-rabi is the name of a god which enters also into the composition of the Hebrew names of Ammi-el, Ammi-nadab,

Rehobo-am, Jerobo-am and Ben-Ammi, and of which Ammon is merely a derivative. More usually this was spelt Khammu by the Babylonians, but we often find the spelling Ammu or Ammi as well. Even the spelling of the second element in the name of Khammu-rabi was not uniform, and, as Dr. Pinches was the first to point out, Ammu-rapi is met with by the side of Khammu-rabi.

Khammu-rabi, like others of his dynasty, claimed divine honours, and was addressed by his subjects as a god. In Babylonian *ilu* is 'god,' the Hebrew *el*, and *Ammu-rapi ilu* would be 'Khammu-rabi the god.' Now *Ammu-rapi ilu is* letter for letter the Amraphel of Genesis.

Thus the difficulty presented by the variant forms of the name of the king of Shinar or Babylon has disappeared with the progress of archaeological knowledge. It is one more illustration of the fact that 'critical' difficulties and objections commonly turn out to be the result of the imperfection of our own knowledge. Archaeological research is constantly demonstrating how dangerous it is to question or deny the veracity of tradition or of an ancient record until we know all the facts.

Chedor-laomer, once the despair of etymologists, proves to be a good Elamite name. We have only to turn to the older Hebrew lexicons to see how helpless mere philology was in face of it; archaeological discovery has made it as clear as the noon-day. There are numerous Elamite names which are composed of two elements, the second being the name of a divinity, and the first the word *kudur* which meant 'servant' or something similar. The father of Eri-Aku or Arioch, for instance, had the name of Kudur-Nankhundi, 'the servant of the goddess Nankhundi.' Lagamar was one of the leading Elamite deities, and Lagamar is letter for letter the Hebrew *la'omer*, which is written *logomor* in the Septuagint. The name of Chedor-laomer can be no Jewish invention.

Even the names of the Canaanitish princes have been illustrated and verified by the cuneiform inscriptions, and thus shown to be no etymological 'fictions' suggested by the story in which they are found. The name of Shinab of Admah was borne by a king of Ammon in the time of Tiglath-pileser III, who writes it Sanibu, and perhaps means 'the moon-god is (my) father,' while Shem-eber of

Zeboiim reminds us of Samu-abi, the founder of the dynasty to which Amraphel belonged.

The accurate preservation of these foreign names of ancient date leads to two conclusions. On the one hand the narrative in which they occur cannot have been handed down orally. It must have been copied from a written Babylonian record and been written from the outset in Hebrew as we find it to-day. In other words, the Hebrew writer had before him a Babylonian chronicle from which he extracted just as much as related to the subject of his own history.

This conclusion is confirmed by an examination of some of the geographical names which are mentioned in the story and which indicate a cuneiform original. I have discussed them elsewhere, and need not therefore repeat here the philological details. Those who are interested in the matter can refer to my *Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, pp. 160, 161.

What the Babylonian record was like is not difficult to discover. The Babylonians reckoned their chronology by the chief events which occurred in each successive year of a king's reign. 'The year of a king's accession,' 'the year in which such and such an event took

place,' was the general formula. It was a shorthand summary of the more detailed history recorded elsewhere, which, however, was similarly dated in the reign of a particular king and in the particular year of it when a certain event had happened.

Now if we turn to the beginning of the narrative in Genesis we find that it, too, is dated, not in the reign of the suzerain and leader of the expedition, Chedor-laomer, much less in that of a Canaanitish prince, or in the life-time of Abram himself, but in the reign of the king of Babylonia. It must have come, therefore, from the official chronicles of Babylonia, from one of those historical works, in fact, which we know to have been current in Babylonia, which would have formed part of the literature studied in the schools and stored in the libraries of Canaan in the age of Babylonian supremacy and influence.

It is even possible that one of the official historical documents sent to the West in the reign of the son and successor of Amraphel has actually come down to us. A cuneiform tablet is preserved in the Museum of Beyrut, which is said to have been found in the

Lebanon, and which Dr. Pinches has shown to have been one of the memoranda or 'state papers' sent by the Babylonian government to its officials and scribes in order to notify to them the special event or events from which the year was to receive its name. As Canaan was included in the Babylonian empire at the time to which the tablet belongs, it is by no means impossible that it was really found in the district of the Lebanon, more especially as Babylonian seal-cylinders of the same period have been discovered there [1].

There is a second conclusion to be deduced from the accuracy with which the names contained in the Babylonian record have been preserved in the Hebrew text. Only one of them has suffered from the carelessness of scribes or the attacks of time; in Ellasar for Larsa two of the letters have been transposed. The fact enhances our opinion of the Hebrew

[1] See the *Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund for April and July, 1900 (pp. 123, 269–273). The inscription reads, 'The year when Samsu-iluna the king dedicated a polished shining weapon of gold and silver, the glory of the temple, to Merodach E-Sagila (the temple of Merodach at Babylon), like the stars of heaven it made brilliant.' This was the seventh year of Samsu-iluna's reign.

text of the Pentateuch; it cannot be so uncertain or corrupt as it has sometimes been the fashion to believe. Even the proper names contained in it have been handed down correctly. The text, in short, must have been transcribed and re-edited from time to time with the same official accuracy as we now know to have been enforced in the case of Assyrian and Babylonian literature.

In Assyria and Babylonia the work was entrusted to the hands of professional scribes. And the minute care which was bestowed upon the accurate transcription of the texts was extraordinary. Where we can compare a text compiled, let us say, for one of the Babylonian libraries of Amraphel with a copy of it made for the library of Nineveh fifteen hundred years later the differences are slight and unimportant. Indeed, the tablets are full of examples of the scrupulous honesty with which the copyists set about their work. If the copy before them was defective, they state the fact and make no attempt to fill in the missing characters by conjecture or by recourse to more perfect tablets; if the original Babylonian character was uncertain, its various Assyrian

equivalents were given; if a date or fact was omitted in the original, the scribe honestly tells us that he does not know it. The reproduction of the older documents was carried out with almost Massoretic exactitude; we look in vain for that free handling of the original authorities about which the 'higher criticism' has so much to say.

The accuracy with which the Babylonian names have been preserved in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis is evidence that the literary methods of Babylonia and Assyria were in use also in the schools and libraries of Israel and Judah. They were not the methods presupposed by the modern critic, but they were methods consecrated by the usage of centuries wherever the influence of Babylonian culture had penetrated. In Judah also, where we hear of the scribes of Hezekiah's library copying the proverbs of Solomon (Prov. xxv. 1), the older literature must have been re-edited and handed down with the same care and accuracy and the same permanence of literary tradition as in the kingdoms of the Euphrates and Tigris, and we may therefore place the same confidence in the letter of its texts as we do in that of the clay tablets of Nineveh.

CHAPTER V

THE LAWS OF AMRAPHEL AND THE MOSAIC CODE

AT the end of the year 1901 an important discovery was made among the ruins of Susa—'Shushan the palace,' as it is called in the Book of Daniel. There M. de Morgan's excavations brought to light the three fragments of an enormous block of polished black marble, thickly covered with cuneiform characters. The characters were engraved with the highest artistic skill, and at the top of the monument was a low relief representing the Babylonian king Khammu-rabi or Amraphel receiving the laws of his kingdom from the Sun-god before whom he stands. When the characters had been copied and read, it was found that they embodied a complete code of laws—the earliest code yet discovered, earlier than that of Moses by eight hundred years, and the foundation of the laws promulgated and obeyed throughout Western Asia.

The compilation of the code marked the

overthrow of the Elamite domination, the recovery of Babylonian independence, and the establishment once more of a Babylonian empire. Amraphel was in more senses than one the father of his people; he cleared his country not only of its foreign enemies but also of the bandits which foreign invasion had brought in its train, he saw that justice was done to the least as well as to the greatest, and he took care that all his subjects should know the laws under which they were called upon to live.

The individual laws had been in existence before. They embody for the most part the decisions of the judges in the special cases brought before them, Babylonian law being, like English law, 'judge-made' and based upon precedent. Hence it is that the code follows no scientific order, and is arranged upon no single principle. Laws stand side by side in it which belong to the infancy and to the old age of a state, and we can trace in the code the same curious mixture of a patriarchal and an advanced state of society that we find in the Book of Genesis.

This may, perhaps, be partly due to the mixture of population in Babylonia. Amraphel

himself belonged, like Abraham, to the Canaanite or South Arabian branch of the Semitic family, which was in many respects socially behind the Semites of Babylonia, with their inheritance of ancient Sumerian civilization. Ideas and principles, therefore, which characterized two different stages of social culture existed side by side in the mind of the legislator, and the people for whom he legislated similarly stood on two different levels of culture and thought.

In Babylonia, as in Israel, the desert and the city adjoined each other. Thus trial by ordeal was admitted, incompatible though it was with the elaborate system of fines and the demand for judicial evidence which otherwise distinguished the Babylonian code, and the doctrine of 'an eye for an eye' and 'a tooth for a tooth' finds a place by the side of laws which imply that the primitive doctrine of retaliation had made way for the conception of impartial and passionless justice.

That Babylonian law should have been already codified in the age of Abraham deprives the 'critical' theory, which makes the Mosaic Law posterior to the Prophets, of one

of its two main supports. The theory was based on two denials—that writing was used for literary purposes in the time of Moses, and that a legal code was possible before the period of the Jewish kings. The discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets disproved the first assumption; the discovery of the code of Khammu-rabi has disproved the second. Centuries before Moses the law had already been codified, and the Semitic populations had long been familiar with the conception of a code.

The code of Khammu-rabi was in force in Canaan as well as in Babylonia. His empire extended to the shores of the Mediterranean, and in one of the inscriptions relating to him the only title he bears is that of 'king of the land of the Amorites.' When the Israelites invaded Palestine, accordingly, we may conclude that, like the Babylonian language and script, the Babylonian code of Khammu-rabi was still current there. Its provisions, in fact, must have been enforced and obeyed wherever the political power and influence of Babylonia were felt.

The codification of the law, therefore, was no new thing in the days of Moses. On the

contrary, it was a very old fact in the history of Western Asia, a fact, too, with which Abraham and Jacob must alike have been acquainted. Not only could the Hebrew leader have compiled a code of laws; we now see that it would have been incredible had he not done so.

Certain German Assyriologists have been at great pains to discover similarities between the codes of Khammu-rabi and Moses, and to infer from this a connexion between them. And there are cases in which the similarity is striking. The free man, for example, who had been enslaved for debt was to be manumitted after three years according to the code of Khammu-rabi, after seven years according to that of Moses. Kidnapping again, was punished in both codes by death, and there are some curious resemblances in the laws relating to death from the goring of an ox. If the owner of the ox could be proved to have been negligent or otherwise responsible for the accident, the Babylonian law enacted that he should be fined half a maneh of silver, or one-third of a maneh if the dead man were a slave; in Israel the penalty of death was exacted in the first case and a fine of half a maneh in the second.

Where, however, the owner was not in fault, he went unpunished in both codes, though the Mosaic code required that the ox should be put to death.

The difference between the two codes in this last particular is characteristic of a difference which runs through the whole of them, and makes the contrast between them far greater and more striking than any agreement that can be pointed out. The code of Khammu-rabi presupposes a settled state, a kingdom, in short, in which law is supreme and the individual is forbidden to take it into his own hands. The code of Moses, on the other hand, is addressed to a more backward community, which has not yet become a state, but is still in the condition of a tribal confederacy. The principle of blood-revenge is still dominant in it; the individual is still allowed to avenge himself, and even cities of refuge are provided in which the homicide may find protection from the 'pursuers of blood.' The law can defend him from private vengeance only as it were by a subterfuge.

It is this principle of blood-revenge — of blood for blood—that necessitates the death of the ox which has caused the death of a

man. 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' is the keynote of the Mosaic legislation; in the legislation of Babylonia the keynote is rather the security of property and the omnipotence of the law. In only two instances is the individual allowed to forestall the action of the law, either when a brigand is caught red-handed or when a man is found robbing the house of a neighbour which has been set on fire. The contrast between the two legislative systems cannot be too forcibly emphasized: the one is intended for a state, the other for tribes which are still in the unsettled condition of the wandering Arab of to-day.

But there is yet another difference between the codes of Babylonia and Israel. The Babylonian code is marked by greater severity, more especially where offences against property are concerned. Doubtless this was partly due to the necessity of suppressing the brigandage which foreign and civil war had left behind it; but the main reason is to be sought in a difference of social organization. Babylonia was a great trading community; its wealth was derived from commerce and agriculture, and

offences against property therefore struck at the foundations of the prosperity of the state. The Israelitish tribes, on the contrary, were neither traders nor agriculturists, and while every individual life was of importance to the community the individual's private property was of comparatively little account. The comparative humanity of the Mosaic code in respect of theft and robbery has the same origin as the prominence given in it to the right of private revenge.

A third point of contrast between the two codes is to be found in the laws of inheritance. The Babylonian father was able to make a will and leave a 'favourite son'—'the son of his eye,' as the phrase goes—'an estate, garden, or house' over and above the share in the property to which he was entitled upon his father's death. Of this there is no sign or trace in the Mosaic code. Testamentary devolution presupposes not only an advanced stage of civilization, but also advanced ideas in regard to the tenure of property. In a tribal confederacy the will was necessarily unknown.

The little that is said in the Mosaic code about the woman's rights of inheritance has

a similar explanation. The code of Khammurabi contains minute directions about the wife's share in the estate left by her husband. The dowry she brought with her at marriage reverts to her, the property settled upon her by her husband is secured to her, and along with her children she has a claim to the usufruct of the rest of the estate. In case there was no marriage settlement she obtains a share of the estate equal to that of each of the children. If the widow marries again she loses the property settled upon her by her first husband, and if her children are still under age she and the second husband are required to support and educate them.

For all this we look in vain in the Mosaic code. Even the dowry brought by the wife is unknown to it. The fact is rendered the more significant by a notice in the Books of Joshua and Judges, which shows that though the gift of the dowry was not prescribed by the Mosaic law it was known in Canaan down to the moment of the Israelitish invasion. When Caleb 'the son of Kenaz,' we read, gave his daughter Achsah in marriage to Othniel upon the capture of Kirjath-sepher 'she moved him

to ask of her father a field.' The Israelitish woman under the Mosaic code did not enjoy the same measure of independence as the Babylonian woman; she was more in the position of the Arab woman of to-day.

The contrast between the two codes is really a contrast in the social organization and advancement in civilization of the two peoples for whom they were compiled. As compared with the cultured inhabitants of the Babylonian empire, the Israelitish tribes for whom Moses legislated were in a backward state. The supremacy of the law was not yet acknowledged; the individual still claimed the privilege of taking it into his own hands; the status of the woman was still that of the mere 'helpmeet' of the man, and laws about property were still but little required.

When we pass from the more general principles which underlie the two codes and their particular provisions the same contrast and difference are apparent. Both, for instance, prohibit the creditor from depriving the insolvent debtor of his all. The creditor who took the debtor's ox in payment of a debt was fined the third of a maneh, or £3, by the

Babylonian law; the law of Moses forbade him to take his 'neighbour's raiment to pledge' after nightfall, 'for that is his raiment only' (Exod. xxii. 26, 27). Moses was addressing a body of nomad tribesmen for whom the cloak in which they slept at night was of primary importance, whereas the law of Khammu-rabi was intended for a settled population, a large part of whom were agriculturists dependent on their ploughing oxen for their means of support.

There is a similar contrast observable in other provisions of the two codes, a contrast which has its roots in the difference between a great and powerful kingdom far advanced in culture and civilization, and desert tribes who have as yet no land that they can call their own. Certain of the laws of the Babylonian code, for example, relate to the surgeon and veterinary, who were already distinguished from one another in the old civilization of the Euphrates. 'If a surgeon,' we read, 'performs a serious operation on a man with a bronze lancet, and the man recovers after a tumour has been opened with the lancet or a disease of the eye has been cured, he shall receive ten shekels of silver' (£1 10*s*.).

'If the operation has been performed on a poor man, he shall receive five shekels of silver.

'If the operation has been performed upon a slave, the slave's master shall pay him two shekels of silver.

'If the surgeon has performed a serious operation with a bronze lancet upon a man, and the man die, either through his opening a tumour with his lancet or destroying the man's eye, his hands shall be cut off.

'If the surgeon has performed the operation upon a slave (or) poor man, and the man dies, slave for slave shall he render.

'If he has opened the tumour unsuccessfully or destroyed the eye, he shall pay the equivalent of the slave's value.

'If the surgeon heals a man's broken limb, or has cured a disease of the intestines, the patient shall pay the surgeon five shekels of silver.

'If a veterinary has performed an operation on an ox or an ass and has cured it, the owner shall pay the veterinary a fee of the sixth part of a shekel (5*d.*).

'If he has performed an operation on an ox or an ass and the animal dies, he must pay the owner a fourth part of its value.'

The code of Moses knows nothing of either surgeon or veterinary. The doctor and the medical school had been left behind in Egypt; there was as yet no need to legislate for them. Until Canaan had been conquered, with its Babylonian culture and medicine and its Babylonian law, the law-book was necessarily silent in regard to medical jurisprudence.

The Mosaic code contains indeed a law analogous to those we have been considering, but in it the place of the doctor is taken by the ordinary tribesman. 'If men strive together,' it is enacted, 'and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed; if he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit; only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed' (Exod. xxi. 18, 19). We are at once transported from the civilized monarchy of Babylonia to the rude life of the Arabian wilderness.

The contrast which a comparison of the Babylonian and Israelitish codes thus shows to exist between them is enhanced by another and significant fact. Usages and laws are

referred to in the patriarchal history as described in the Book of Genesis for which we can find no parallel in the Mosaic legislation. They are explained, however, by the newly-found code of Khammu-rabi. I have long since pointed out that the details of the purchase of the cave of Machpelah by Abraham are in strict conformity with the requirements of Babylonian commercial law as it was administered in the Abrahamic age. Even the technical term 'shekels of silver' was borrowed from Babylonia, as well as the description of the property as consisting of 'field,' 'rock-chamber,' and 'trees.'

But we are now learning that in other respects also the law which lies behind the narratives of Genesis is the law, not of Moses, but of Khammu-rabi. Thus the action of Sarah in giving Hagar to Abraham and of Rachel in giving Bilhah to Jacob when they themselves were childless was in strict accordance with the Babylonian code. This ordained that the wife could present her husband with a concubine, and if she had had no children it was even permitted him to take a second and inferior wife. As a corollary of this it was further enacted that 'if a man has

married a wife, and she has given a concubine to her husband by whom he has had a child, should the concubine afterwards have a dispute with her mistress because she has borne children, her mistress cannot sell her; she can only lay a task upon her and make her live with the other slaves.' Now, therefore, we can understand the conduct of Sarah after her quarrel with Hagar; the law did not allow her to sell her former maid, and all that could be done was to induce Abraham to drive Hagar from his camp.

Equally striking is the explanation now afforded us of the words of the childless Abraham when speaking of his house-steward, Eliezer, as his heir. Adoption plays a prominent part in the code of Khammu-rabi as well as in the family life of later Babylonia, and by the act of adoption the heir to the property of a free man became himself free, even though his status originally was that of a slave. Adoption, in fact, whether of the slave or of the free man, was as familiar to the Babylonian code as it was unfamiliar to the code of Israel.

Even the infliction of death by burning, with which Judah threatened his daughter-in-law

Tamar on the supposition that she was a widow, finds its explanation in the Babylonian code, where the same punishment is enacted against a nun who has been unfaithful to her vows of virginity or widowhood. Perhaps, too, we may see in Jacob's admission that whoever had stolen Laban's gods should be put to death (Gen. xxxi. 32), a reference to the Babylonian law, which punished sacrilege with death.

The conclusion that must be drawn from the foregoing facts is obvious. A comparison of the code of Babylonia with that of Israel has made it clear that the latter was intended for a body of nomad tribes who were not yet settled in a country where the laws of Babylonia were still in force. In other words, the Mosaic code must belong to the age to which tradition assigns it, and presupposes the historical conditions which the Biblical narrative describes. Not only has the code of Khammu-rabi proved that the legislation of Moses was possible, it has also shown that the social and political circumstances under which it claims to have arisen are the only ones under which it could have been compiled.

And yet more. While the Mosaic code, in

contradistinction to the Babylonian code, belongs to the desert rather than to the city, the laws implied in the narratives of the Book of Genesis are those which actually were current in Canaan in the patriarchal age. No writer of a post-Mosaic date could have imagined or invented them; like the names preserved in Genesis, they characterize the patriarchal period and no other. The answer of archaeology to the theories of modern 'criticism' is complete: the Law preceded the Prophets, and did not follow them.

At present it is the civil law alone which we can compare with that of Babylonia. The Babylonian ritual code has not yet been discovered. But many of its provisions are known to us from the religious and magical texts, and their resemblance to the provisions of the ritual law of Israel is at times startling. Even the technical terms of the Mosaic ritual are found again in Babylonia. Those who wish to study the subject may turn to my Gifford *Lectures on the Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, where the chief points of likeness and connexion are pointed out.

There was, in fact, a closer connexion between

the ritual code of Babylonia and that of Israel than there was between their civil codes; and before long we may hope to have clear archaeological evidence that the ritual enactments of the Pentateuch, which have been assigned to different periods of history and religious development, all alike have their analogues in a ritual that was in force in Babylonia centuries before Moses was born.

At all events the civil code of Khammu-rabi explains the form under which the civil code of Moses has come down to us. The formula of the individual laws is the same in both. Each law is introduced by the particle 'if.' The reason of this has been furnished by the cuneiform documents. Babylonian law was, like English law, 'judge-made,' each law embodying a decision of the royal judges in some special suit. The code of Khammu-rabi, in fact, consists of a collection of judicial decisions; Babylonian law resting as much on precedent as the law of our own country.

The code of Moses, the several enactments of which have the same verbal form as the enactments of the Babylonian code, must therefore have been based on similar decisions. A

more remarkable confirmation of the Biblical narrative could not have been afforded. We read in the Book of Exodus how, before the codification of the law at Sinai, judges were appointed who 'judged the people at all seasons'; only the more important cases being reserved for Moses himself. Moses thus occupied the same position as a court of final appeal as that which was occupied by the king in the Babylonia of Amraphel or by the high-priest in the Babylonia of an earlier age, and it is noteworthy that the arrangement was suggested to him by the high-priest of Midian—a country that had once been within the Babylonian sphere of influence.

The origin of the several laws of which the Babylonian and Mosaic codes are composed explains their heterogeneous and unsystematic character. The different groups into which they fall are not connected with one another by any general principle running through them, and enactments which belong to different stages of social development and organization stand in them side by side. It is not that the codes themselves consist of compilations made at various dates, but that the

individual laws which constitute them are decisions of the courts, and consequently were not pronounced at one and the same time.

In the body of the code Khammu-rabi assumes the credit of the legislation; it was he alone who had collected and published the laws of which it was composed. But the code is preceded and followed by an address to the gods of the Babylonian cities, at the head of whom stands 'the supreme god,' the special deity, it may be, of the monarch himself. And at the top of the monument on which the code is engraved is a bas-relief representing the king receiving the laws from the Sun-god, 'the divine judge of heaven and earth.' The ultimate source consequently to which the laws are referred is the inspiration of the god. This is in accordance with the older Babylonian belief, which assigned the first law-book to the creator-god Ea, and made him the instructor of man in all the arts of life.

The parallelism between the Babylonian belief and the history of the Mosaic legislation is too obvious to need emphasizing. Moses was the legislator of Israel, and his civil code consisted in large measure of the legal 'judge-

ments' of himself and his fellow judges. With all this, however, it was nevertheless derived from God; the inspiration of Yahveh was the true source from which it had come. It was the same spirit of inspiration as that which fell on the seventy 'elders' and judges of the Israelitish tribes, and in regard to which Moses declared that he would 'that the Lord would put His Spirit upon' the whole people (Numb. xi. 24–29).

We may now sum up the results of the latest discovery in Assyriology. It has for ever shattered the 'critical' theory which would put the Prophets before the Law, it has thrown light on the form and character of the Mosaic code, and it has indirectly vindicated the historical character of the narratives of Genesis. If such are the results of a single discovery, what may we not expect when the buried libraries of Babylonia have been more fully excavated, and their contents copied and read?

CHAPTER VI

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE PENTATEUCH

IT is now time to turn from Babylonia to Egypt, from the clay tablets and monoliths of Assyria or Babylonia to the papyri and temples of the valley of the Nile. We have seen how the most confidently announced assumptions and 'results' of 'criticism' have crumbled into dust before the facts of archaeology in the departments of history and law; we must now consider whether the same is the case in the province of geography. That the geography of Palestine itself and the lands immediately adjoining it should be correctly described in the Old Testament narratives proves little either one way or another for their authenticity and age; on any supposition the writers of them lived in the country wherein the scene of the narratives is laid, and except in an intentionally 'Haggadic' production like the apocryphal Book of Judith the details of its geography would be correctly given.

But it is otherwise when we pass from Palestine to Egypt. The political changes which swept over the monarchy of the Nile profoundly altered from time to time the geography of the Delta and its relations to Asia. Fortified cities were built and deserted, capitals were shifted, and canals opened or blocked up. The geography of the Eastern Delta differed essentially at different periods of Egyptian history. A map of it drawn in the age of the Nineteenth Dynasty would have presented wholly different features from one drawn at any other time.

There are three periods when Old Testament history comes into contact with that of Egypt, the patriarchal period, the period of the Exodus, and the period of the Israelitish kings. Of these the period of the Exodus is the only one which concerns us at present. If the 'critic' is right, the story of the Exodus was written down centuries after the supposed event, and was derived, not from contemporaneous documents, but from popular tradition and legend. Let us once more apply the archaeological test, and see what is the verdict.

Egyptologists were long since agreed that if

there is any truth in the story of the Exodus Ramses II, the great Pharaoh of the Nineteenth Dynasty, must have been the Pharaoh of the Oppression. One of the chief objects with which the Egypt Exploration Fund was started was to put this conclusion to the proof, and it was not long before the object was achieved. We are told in the Book of Exodus that the two cities built by the Israelites for the Pharaoh were Pithom and Raamses. That Raamses was built by Ramses II was already known from a papyrus which gives an account of the city, and in 1884 Dr. Naville discovered the ruins of Pithom. Excavations soon revealed the further fact that Pithom too owed its foundation to the same Pharaoh, and thus established once for all—if the Biblical statement is correct—that Ramses II and the Pharaoh at whose court Moses was brought up were one and the same.

It is thus clear that the Exodus took place while the Nineteenth Dynasty was still reigning in Egypt. If, therefore, the Biblical account of the Exodus is historically true, the geographical details involved in it must correspond with the map of the Delta as it existed at that particular epoch. If, on the other hand, the map pre-

supposed by them is of a later date, the critical contention will be justified and the story of Moses evaporates into mist.

Now it so happens that we know a good deal about the geography of the Eastern Delta in the age of the Nineteenth Dynasty, thanks to the papyri which have come down to us from that period. Egypt was protected from Asia by a great line of fortifications, the Shur, or 'Wall,' as it is called in the Pentateuch, which followed much the same course as the Suez Canal of to-day. The passages through the Wall were strongly guarded, and to the west of it was the district of Thukot or Succoth, of which Pithom was the capital. Goshen stretched westwards of this in the Wadi Tumilât along the banks of the modern Freshwater Canal and in the direction of Belbeis and Zagazig.

Meneptah, the son and successor of Ramses II, built a Khetem or 'Fortress' in the district of Thukot, which may have been the Etham of the Pentateuch. But Khetem was a generic name corresponding to the Semitic Migdol, and there was another Khetem built by Ramses II which was nearer to the Wall. Both Khetems would have been 'on the edge of the wilderness.'

The land of Goshen, we are expressly informed by Meneptah, had been left 'as pasture for cattle' and handed over to Asiatic nomads 'since the days of his forefathers.' In the fifth year of his reign, when Libyan invaders were overrunning Egypt, it was still in the possession of the 'foreigners,' and on the skirts of it accordingly the invaders and their allies had pitched their tents. Shortly afterwards, however, the Asiatic herdsmen had disappeared, and the whole district was without inhabitants. A letter written to the Pharaoh in the eighth year of his reign by an official stationed on the frontier makes this clear. The writer says in it: 'We have allowed the tribes of the Bedawin from Edom to pass the fortress (Khetem) of Meneptah in the district of Thukot [and go] to the lakes of Pithom of Meneptah in the district of Thukot, in order to feed themselves and their herds on the great estate of the Pharaoh.' This 'great estate' may be 'the farmstead' which the Septuagint substitutes for Pi-hahiroth in Exod. xiv. 9. At any rate, the lakes lay to the west of Pithom, and their site can still be recognized.

That the district was regarded as a private domain of the Pharaohs may be gathered from

the Old Testament narrative. It was given by the Pharaoh to Jacob and his sons, as Meneptah repeats had been the case; and when the Israelites were transformed into royal serfs it must have been upon the plea that the land on which they dwelt was peculiarly a possession of the king; their exodus left it deserted, and the jealously guarded gates of the great Wall were accordingly opened, to let new settlers enter the vacant pastures.

There is yet another letter on papyrus which supplements the geographical information of the first. It was sent to Meneptah's successor Seti II, and describes the pursuit of two fugitive slaves who had escaped along the same road as that which had been followed by the Israelites:— 'I set out,' says the writer, 'from the hall of the royal palace on the ninth day of the month Epiphi, in the evening, in pursuit of the two slaves. I reached the fortress (Khetem) of Thukot on the tenth of Epiphi. I was informed that the men had resolved to take their way towards the south. On the twelfth I reached the fortress. There I learnt that grooms who had come from the neighbourhood [had reported] that the fugitives had already passed the Wall

to the north of the Migdol of King Seti,' who may be either Seti I, the father of Ramses II, or Seti II, his great-grandson.

The Wall extended southwards until it met an arm of the Gulf of Suez. Dr. Naville has shown that this must have extended a good deal further north than it does to-day, and the fugitive from Egypt would have found it difficult to evade the vigilance of the Egyptian garrisons.

Such was the geography of the Delta at the time when, if the historical details of the Book of Exodus may be trusted, Moses was born in the land of Goshen and his fellow-countrymen escaped finally from their house of bondage. It was a geography that was not true either of the age which preceded the Nineteenth Dynasty or of the centuries which followed it. After the fall of the successors of Ramses II we hear no more of Thukot and its Khetem, of Migdol on the line of fortification, or even of the Wall itself. The district of Goshen is no longer set apart for the Semitic herdsmen of Canaan. The political situation was changed, and with the change in the political situation came a change in the map of the land.

It is, however, with the map of the Delta in

the age of the Nineteenth Dynasty that the geography of the Exodus agrees. Pithom and Raamses were built for the Pharaoh of the Oppression, and when the flight from Egypt took place in the reign of his successor the Israelites passed from their old homes in the land of Goshen to Raamses and Succoth, and from thence to the Khetem 'on the edge of the wilderness.' Here they found themselves confronted by the Wall with its Migdol, while the sea barred their way towards the south (Exod. xiv. 2). The desert had 'shut them in,' and it seemed as if they would fall an easy prey to the pursuing forces of their late masters.

This agreement of the geography of the Exodus with the actual geography of the Delta in the time of the Nineteenth Dynasty could hardly be explained, if the Biblical narrative had been compiled two or three hundred years after the event, in an age when the map of Egypt had been altered and the older geography forgotten. Still less could it be explained, if the whole story had been invented or thrown into shape in Palestine. There was no atlas to which the Hebrew writer could have turned, much less an atlas which represented geo-

graphical conditions that had long since passed away. History fixes the Exodus of Israel in the epoch of the Nineteenth Dynasty, and geography assigns it to the same date. To that period, and to that period alone, does the geography of the Pentateuch apply.

The fact admits of only one explanation. The story of the Exodus, as it is set before us in the Old Testament, must have been derived from contemporaneous written documents, and must describe events which actually took place. It is no fiction or myth, no legend whose only basis is folk-lore and unsubstantial tradition, but history in the real sense of the word. We may rest assured, 'criticism' notwithstanding, that Israel was once in Egypt, and that the narrative of its flight under the leadership of Moses is founded on sober fact.

CHAPTER VII

HEBREW AND BABYLONIAN COSMOLOGY

IT has long been recognized that the earlier chapters of Genesis have a Babylonian colouring and background. Two of the rivers of Paradise are the Tigris and Euphrates, and it was at the Tower of Babel that the confusion of tongues took place. The discovery of the Babylonian story of the Deluge proved that the Biblical account of the Flood also had a Babylonian parallel and prototype, and the discovery of the Babylonian story of the Deluge was followed by that of the Babylonian story of creation, which showed that here too the cuneiform tablets and the Book of Genesis were in close accord. The cosmology of Genesis looks back to that of Babylonia.

The fragments of an epic poem which contained one of the versions of the Babylonian story of the creation were discovered by Mr. George Smith. Other fragments have since been found, more especially by Mr. L. W. King,

and we now possess the poem in a fairly complete form. It is really a poem in honour of Merodach, the patron god of Babylon, and must have originally been composed by a Babylonian writer. As the inhabitants of Babylon regarded their patron god as the creator, the epic naturally includes an account of the way in which the heavens and the earth were made. Babylon, however, was a comparatively modern city in Babylonia, and its god did not become the supreme deity of the country until his city had been made a capital by Khammurabi. Before that date he was but one among a host of minor divinities, over whom the 'great gods' of the older sanctuaries presided. Chief among these were Anu, the god of heaven, whose seat of worship was Erech, in the centre of Babylonia, Bel, the god of the earth and air, who was adored at Nippur in the north, and Ea of Eridu, on the coast of the Persian Gulf, the culture-god of Chaldaea, whose domain was in the flood.

When Merodach and his city usurped the place of the older divinities and the earlier centres of Babylonian religion, the attributes of the older gods passed to him. He became the

son of Ea and took upon him the name and prerogatives of Bel. Both Ea and Bel had been creators in the cosmologies of their respective worshippers, and when their powers were transferred to the younger deity he necessarily was made the creator of the world.

But in the epic the creation of the world is but an episode in the story of the war between Tiamât, the dragon of chaos and darkness, and Merodach, the champion of the gods of light. It was his victory over the dragon which gave Merodach the right to be supreme among his divine peers and to create the present world of law and order. The heavens and earth were fashioned out of the two halves of his defeated foe, while 'bolts' were driven in and 'watchmen' set, that the anarchic 'fountains' of Tiamât might not again break forth from above the firmament and destroy the world of gods and men.

In its present shape the epic consists of seven tablets or books. The first is an introduction embodying the atheistic philosophy of a late age, when the divine personages of mythology had been resolved into the material forces and elements of Nature, and creation was

regarded as a process of self-evolution. The second and third books recount the war of the gods, and the fourth ends with the victory of Merodach and the creation of the heavenly firmament. The fifth tablet describes the appointment of the heavenly bodies for signs and seasons and days and years. They were not created like the firmament, since in the eyes of the Babylonians the sun and moon and stars were deities, and consequently had come into existence at the same time as Merodach himself. What the creator did, therefore, was to fix their places and duty, to 'ordain the year' with its twelve months, and to bind the whole together by inviolable laws, 'so that none might err or ever go astray.'

In the sixth book the creation of man is narrated. Man was made of bone which the god had fashioned, and of the blood of life which he had drawn from his own veins. For Babylonian religion held that the gods were in the likeness of men, and hence that, conversely, men were made in the image of the gods. It was in order 'that the service of the gods might be performed and their shrines (built)' that man was created and bidden to 'inhabit' the earth.

The seventh and last book of the epic is a hymn of praise sung by the gods in honour of Merodach, in which the attributes and powers of the other 'great gods' are transferred to him. It formed originally no part of the story of the creation or even of the legend of Merodach; it was an independent poem, going back to pre-Semitic times, and incorporated by the author of the epic in his work. Fragments have come down to us of some of the commentaries that were written upon the original text. All that the author of the epic has done has been to tell us that it was sung in the council-chamber of the gods, and to add a few lines of epilogue at its end.

Tiamât, the dragon of chaos, is the impersonation of the primaeval deep, of that formless abyss of waters in which the Babylonians saw the beginning of all things. Babylonian theories of creation first grew up in the city of Eridu, the primitive sea-port of the country, where new land was continually being formed by the accumulation of silt. We possess a pre-Semitic, Sumerian account of the creation, which differs entirely from that of the epic, and constituted one of the hymns that were sung in

the temple of Ea at Eridu. In it Ea was still the creator of the world; he is the lord of the deep, out of which the dry land arose through the settlement of mud around a bundle of reeds that the creator had planted in the shoreless sea. Once the land was formed, Ea stocked it with 'the beast of the field' and 'the green herb'; of the creation of the heavens no word is said.

The cosmological legends of Babylonia must have been known to Abraham before he left Ur of the Chaldees. They were pictured on the walls of the Babylonian temples and taught in the Babylonian schools. With the rest of Babylonian culture they passed to the West. Even in Upper Egypt fragments of Babylonian legends have been found among the cuneiform tablets of Tel el-Amarna, and the points which separate the words in them one from another indicate that they must have been used as exercises at school. Long before the age of Moses the Babylonian theory of creation and the myths and poems which embodied it would have been familiar to the educated native of Canaan.

A German scholar, Gunkel, has demonstrated

that there are references to the Babylonian story of the creation and the dragon Tiamât in passages of the Old Testament, which the most sceptical criticism allows to be of early date. There is no longer any need to prove that Jewish writers could have become acquainted with the cosmology of Babylonia only during the Exile. That it was known in Palestine long before that period is now admitted on all hands. Those who, like the contemporaries of Moses, could read the cuneiform tablets of Babylonia would have been familiar not only with the general belief of the Babylonians concerning the creation of the world, but also with the literary form or forms which that belief had assumed.

The resemblance between the Babylonian Epic of the Creation and the first chapter of the Book of Genesis is too striking not to have attracted attention from the outset. In both alike there is 'in the beginning' a watery chaos, above which the darkness brooded, while 'the earth was without form and void.' In both alike the creation of the present world commences with the creation of light; it was the destruction of the powers of darkness by the

gods of light that made it possible for the Babylonian creator to begin his work. In both there is a firmament dividing the imprisoned waters above it from the waters beneath, and in both, too, the creation of the heavens and earth precede the appointment of the heavenly bodies to mark and measure time. In both the creation of man is the final consummation of the creator's acts, and the artificial division of the Babylonian epic into seven books corresponds with the seven days of the Hebrew account.

This, however, is not all. With all the resemblance that exists between the Babylonian and the Biblical narratives, there is yet a profound difference. Yet the difference is one which indicates not only the priority of the Babylonian version, but also the deliberate purpose of the Hebrew writer to contravene and correct it. We have seen, for instance, that in both accounts the heavenly bodies are appointed to measure time, and that the appointment follows not only the creation of the heavens and earth, but also of light itself. Indeed, in the Hebrew cosmology it even follows the creation of vegetation. The fact has often been a cause of difficulty, since according to the Book of Genesis the celestial

bodies were created on the fourth day as well as set to measure time.

But the difficulty is solved when we compare the Biblical account with the Babylonian epic. Here the sun and the moon and stars could not be created; they were gods, and consequently had existed before the creation of the world was begun. But for the writer of Genesis there was but one God, and the heavenly bodies were as much His creation as the green herb or the beast of the field. It is probably for this reason that he avoids calling the sun and moon by names which in Babylonian belief were the names of deities; for him the 'sun' and the 'moon' are the 'two great lights,' while 'the stars' take the place of the goddess Istar, who in the Babylonian story stood at the side of the 'sun' and 'moon.' But in thus ascribing the creation of the celestial bodies to the one and only God the Biblical writer has been unable to avoid the difficulty of making the morning and evening to have followed one another, and vegetation to have come into being before the sun or the moon. In the Babylonian version evening and morning naturally succeeded each other as soon as the gods of light appeared upon the scene,

and the heavenly bodies were merely appointed afterwards to mark out the seasons of the year; the fact that the writer in Genesis, while declaring that their appointment was accompanied by their creation, nevertheless adheres to the order of creation as described in the Babylonian epic, is a plain proof that that order of creation was already known to him, and was too firmly established to be altered.

But it is also a proof that he has changed and corrected the Babylonian version with deliberate intention. The heavenly bodies, he implicitly teaches, are creatures, and not gods. Even at the risk of throwing the story of creation into confusion and introducing into it elements of difficulty, he has formally contradicted and denied the polytheism of his Babylonian prototype. The polytheistic elements it contained are not merely rejected, they are contradicted and denied.

The same fact is apparent in other parts of the Biblical cosmology. The polytheism and mythology of the Babylonian theory are met with a stern negative, along with the materialism of the preface to the epic. The legend of the war in heaven between Merodach and Tiamât finds

no place in the narrative of Genesis, whatever references to it may be discoverable elsewhere in the Old Testament, and the declaration that man was created to worship the gods and build their sanctuaries is similarly excluded from it. There is no dragon Tiamât out of whom, as in the Babylonian legend, the firmament of heaven may be made, even though the Babylonian conception of a firmament is retained, and equally there is no impersonation of the deep whose waters should be gathered into seas. By the side of the Creator of Genesis no other god can exist.

The materialistic philosophy of the introduction to the epic is banished from the pages of Genesis like the polytheistic mythology which accompanies it. It expressed beliefs that had long been current in the philosophic schools of Babylonia, and endeavoured to harmonize the religious legends of the people with the more scientific knowledge of the few. The epic commences with the description of a formless matter, independent of the Creator, generating itself and developing into the divine. 'In the beginning was the deep, which begat the heavens and the earth, the chaos of Tiamât, who was the

mother of them all.' Against this, on the forefront of Genesis stands the declaration that 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' The earth was indeed a formless chaos resting on the dark waters of the primaeval deep —thus far the conceptions of the Babylonian cosmology are adopted, but the chaos and the deep were not the first of things; God was already there, and His breath or spirit brooded over the abyss. While the letter of the Babylonian story has been followed, the spirit of it has been changed. The Hebrew writer must have had the Babylonian version before him, and intentionally given an uncompromising denial to all in it that impugned the omnipotence and unity of God.

It is true that one or two expressions have been left in the Biblical narrative which are derived from the polytheism of its Babylonian prototype. The name of Tehom, 'the deep,' the Babylonian Tiamât, is used without the article, and we read that God said: 'Let *us* make man in *our* image.' But such expressions merely show how closely the letter of the Babylonian system of cosmology has been adhered to; they impair in no way the stern monotheism

of the Biblical narrative, and only serve to bring into greater relief the twofold fact that the cosmology of Genesis is the cosmology of Babylonia in a fundamentally changed form.

Perhaps nowhere is the change of form more striking than in the different conception of the mode of creating which distinguishes the Book of Genesis and the Babylonian epic. In the epic creation is either the result of evolution on the part of godless matter, or else the creator works like a craftsman, fashioning the universe out of pre-existing materials and putting it under bolt and key. In the Book of Genesis, on the other hand, God speaks, and it is done. Creation by the word is indeed known to the author of the epic; in the assembly of the gods Merodach is described as destroying and re-creating by the simple power of his word, and thereby proving himself a fitting champion of them in the struggle with the dragon; but in the actual creation of the world the word is never employed. In the mind of the Babylonian polytheist the gods were in the image of men, and as men therefore they were compelled to work.

The conclusion to which a comparison of the

Hebrew and Babylonian accounts of the creation has thus brought us is unmistakeable. On the one hand the cosmology of Genesis presupposes the cosmology of Babylonia; the same conceptions underlie both, and the watery abyss of Genesis has its first home among the seafaring natives of Eridu. But on the other hand between the two, as they lie before us in the Bible and in the cuneiform literature of Babylonia, there is an impassable gulf. The cosmology of Babylonia is thickly overgrown and intertwined with polytheistic, mythological, and even materialistic elements; in the cosmology of Genesis these are all swept away, and in place of them the doctrine is proclaimed that there is but one God, the Creator of the whole universe.

The same contrast meets us elsewhere, when we examine the religious literature of Babylonia and the contents of the Old Testament side by side. Babylonian literature is full of hymns and penitential psalms, of prayers and addresses to the deity which breathe a deep spiritual earnestness, and often rise in accents of passionate devotion. From time to time we find language in them which reminds us of the psalms of

David or even the evangelical utterances of an Isaiah, and we are tempted to ask whether after all there was so profound a religious difference as we have been taught to believe between the inspiration of the 'chosen people' and that of their Semitic kindred, whether after all the spirit of the Hebrew scriptures may not have been the common heritage of the Semitic race.

But hardly is the question asked before we are suddenly brought, as it were, to a stand by passages and words that express the grossest polytheism or the puerilities of a grotesque and stupid superstition. Passionate outpourings of deep spiritual contrition for sin or the most exalted descriptions of the divine attributes are mingled with expressions of belief that are at once degrading and grotesque. To us the mixture seems incomprehensible, to the Babylonian it was natural and right. His mind was so steeped in polytheistic beliefs and practices, in the superstitions of magic and the dark rites of sorcery, that he could see no incompatibility between them and the purer and more spiritual thoughts that came from time to time to his soul from the light 'that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' The Israelite stood

alone among the Semitic peoples of the ancient East in maintaining that besides Yahveh there was no other god, and that the law of Yahveh was a law of righteousness.

And yet the Israelite was not better educated or more advanced in philosophic thought than his kinsfolk in Babylonia and Canaan. On the contrary, he stood on a lower level of culture and civilization, and his legal code, as we have seen, implies a less developed social organization than that which Babylonia possessed several centuries earlier. How, then, can we explain the gulf, fathomless and impassable, which lies between the cosmology of Genesis and the cosmology of Babylonia, or between the Old Testament literature as a whole and the religious literature of the Euphrates, without calling in the aid of an agency other than human? Whence came the revelation of the true nature of God, and His relation to man, which is announced in the first verse of the Pentateuch, and which stamps the literature of the Old Testament to the end?

It was certainly not from Babylonia or Canaan that it was derived, still less from Egypt; like the gift of reason and speech which distinguishes man from the lower animals, it remains solitary

and unique, a fact which we must accept, but which purely human science has failed to explain. We can analyse and trace the origin of the material elements that underlie the fact; but between the material elements and the fact itself there is a break of connexion which the forces at present known to us are unable to unite.

The revelation of monotheism is not confined to the cosmology of Genesis or the writings of the later prophets. We find it also in the Ten Words or Commandments, which even the 'critic' allows us to believe were Mosaic in origin. It goes back to the Mosaic age, to the time when Israel fled from Egypt and was still under the tutelage of the wilderness. On the other hand, the cosmology and legends, the myths and gods of Babylonia were known to the Canaan of the Mosaic age. Long before the Exile the Hebrew literature which has survived to us shows that the Israelitish people also were well acquainted with the cosmological theories and mythological monsters of Babylonia. The Babylonian story of the creation could have been known to the great Hebrew legislator, and it is quite as easy to believe that it was he who

found in it the material for his work, as that this was done by some later and unknown author.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the writer of the first chapter of Genesis had a cuneiform document before him which he was able to read; and we know of no periods when this could have been the case except the Mosaic and the epoch of the Exile. But the epoch of the Exile is excluded, if for no other reason, at all events for the very sufficient one that no Jew would then have borrowed from his enslavers a story of the creation which was saturated with their superstitions and idolatry. The simplest hypothesis is, after all, that which agrees with tradition.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DOCTRINE OF RELIGIOUS EVOLUTION

DRIVEN from its first assumption of the late use of writing for literary purposes, the 'higher criticism' has fallen back on the doctrine of evolution. Evolution is the keynote of modern science, both physical and psychological, the magical key with which it hopes to unlock the secrets of the universe. There has been evolution and development in history, as well as in the forms of life, in the systems of the material universe or in the processes of thought. There must have been evolution also in religious and moral ideas, in political conceptions and theological dogmas. If once we could discover its law, we should be able to trace the course it has followed, and know what is first and what is last in the religious systems of the past.

The disciples of the 'higher criticism' have assumed not only that the law is discoverable,

but also that they have themselves discovered it. They know precisely how religious ideas must have developed in the past, and can consequently determine the relative age of the various forms in which they are presented to us. Certain conceptions of the priesthood or the sanctuary, the 'critic' tells us, are older than others; therefore, if there are books or passages which do not conform to his ruling, they must be forced to do so by an alteration of the traditional dates. What the critic believes to have been the order of evolution is thus made the measure of their age and authenticity.

But it does not follow that what the 'critic' believes must have been the order of evolution was necessarily so. In all probability it was not. The European critic of the twentieth century, writing in his library of printed books, has little in common with the Oriental of the ancient world. The thoughts of the one are not the thoughts of the other; the very world in which they move is not the same.

The 'critical assumption,' in fact, is an inversion of the true method of science. We must first know what was the order of the phenomena before we can discover the law of

evolution which they have followed. It is only when we have ascertained what forms of life or matter have succeeded others that we can trace in them a process of development. We cannot reverse the method, and determine the sequence of the phenomena from a hypothetical law of evolution.

This, however, is just what the 'higher critics' of the Old Testament have attempted to do. They have assumed that what seems to them the natural order in the development of spiritual or moral ideas was the actual order, and they have mutilated and re-dated the literary material in order to support the assumption.

It has seemed to them that the institution of an Aaronic priesthood must have grown out of an earlier Levitical system, and that the codification of the law of Israel must have followed and not preceded the development of prophecy; and, consequently, setting tradition at defiance, they have remodelled the ancient history of Israel, rewritten its sacred books, and forced the evidence into conformity with their historical scheme. What archaeology has to say to their second assumption,

that of the late date of the codification of the Mosaic Law, we have already seen; when the ritual code of Babylonia is discovered, it is likely that the 'critical' theory of the priority of the Levitical to the Aaronic priesthood will fare no better than the theory that the Law is later than the Prophets.

In fact, the whole application of a supposed law of evolution to the religious and secular history of the ancient Oriental world is founded on what we now know to have been a huge mistake. The Mosaic age, instead of coming at the dawn of ancient Oriental culture, really belongs to the evening of its decay. The Hebrew legislator was surrounded on all sides by the influences of a decadent civilization. Religious systems and ideas had followed one another for centuries; the ideas had been pursued to their logical conclusions, and the systems had been worked out in a variety of forms. In Egypt and Babylonia alike there was degeneracy rather than progress, retrogression rather than development. The actual condition of the Oriental world in the age of Moses, as it has been revealed to us by archaeology, leaves little room for the particular kind

of evolution of which the 'higher criticism' has dreamed.

But in truth the archaeological discoveries of the last half-dozen years in Egypt and Krete have once for all discredited the claim of 'criticism' to apply its theories of development to the settlement of chronological or historical questions. It is not very long since it was assuring us that the civilization of Egypt had little or no existence before the age of the Fourth Dynasty, that no records had been kept or monuments preserved of so 'prehistoric' a period, and that the kings whom tradition assigned to it were but the 'half-fabulous' fictions of later centuries.

And yet these half-fabulous fictions have turned out to have lived in the full blaze of Egyptian culture; their tombs and public works were on a grandiose scale, their art was far advanced, their political organization complete. The art of writing was not only known, but an alphabet had been invented, and a cursive hand formed. A chronological register of time was kept year by year, and the height of each successive Nile minutely recorded. The civilization of Egypt in the reign of Menes was as

high as it was under the Pharaohs of the Fourth Dynasty. The application of the canons of the 'higher criticism' to the earlier history of Egypt has signally failed.

Nor is it better when we turn to the eastern basin of the Mediterranean, and the islands and coasts which were afterwards Greek. Here, we were told, there was nothing but the darkness of an illiterate barbarism before the beginnings of the classical age. The traditions which had survived of an earlier period were resolved into myths and fabrications, and we were bidden to believe that the pre-Hellenic history of the Ægean could never be recovered, for none had existed. A knowledge of writing, we were assured, was unknown in the age in which the Homeric poems first took shape, and art sprang ready-made, like Athena from the head of Zeus, in the stormy epoch of the Persian wars. Backed by his favourite appeal to the want of evidence, and fortified with his doctrine of development and his assumption of the late introduction of writing, the 'critic' was confident that his negative conclusions could never be gainsaid, and that what had passed for the earlier history of Greek lands had

been dismissed by him for ever to the realm of myth.

The awakening has come with a vengeance. The scepticism of the 'critic' has been proved to have been but the measure of his own ignorance, the want of evidence to have been merely his own ignorance of it. The spade of the excavator in Krete has effected more in three or four years than the labours and canons of the 'critic' in half a century. The whole fabric he had raised has gone down like a house of cards, and with it the theories of development of which he felt so confident.

Not only have we discovered that the traditions of the empire and splendour of Minos were right, that even the stories of the Labyrinth and the Minotaur had a foundation of fact, but we have also learnt that the art of classical Greece was no self-evolved thing, but as much a renaissance as the European renaissance of the fifteenth century. The culture of the lands of Krete in the age of Moses was equal to that of their Egyptian contemporaries; their architectural conceptions were far advanced, their fayence and inlays of the first order, the art of their engraved gems unsurpassed even in

the palmiest days of later Greece. Indeed, in the age of Moses the art of the eastern Mediterranean was already decaying, strange conventional designs and figures had come into existence, and forms which we associate with the art of the Roman empire were already in fashion.

As for illiteracy, there was writing and in plenty. No less than three different scripts—if not four—were in use in Krete alone, and traces of their use have been met with as far north as Bœotia and the Troad. The clay tablets of Babylonia were employed as well as the papyri of Egypt for writing purposes, and the characters of a linear script were inscribed in ink on shreds of pottery. And all this plenitude of literary culture and luxury was being enjoyed by the islands and coastlands of the eastern Mediterranean centuries before Homer told of its departed glories, or Hellenic civilization took up again the broken threads of the past. The development which the 'critic' has imagined—a development out of barbarism, illiteracy, and the rude beginnings of art—is simply a dream and nothing more.

It would be affectation, however, if not dis-

ingenuousness to pretend that the work of the 'critic' has been altogether barren. This is far from being the case. We have only to compare a history of early Greece, as it was written a hundred years ago, with the history of early Greece, as it is being rewritten by archaeology to-day, to see how much there was which needed to be cleared away. We can never return to the point of view of our forefathers in regard either to Greek or to Hebrew history.

But where 'criticism' went wrong was in its belief that, unaided, it could solve all the problems of history. The result was the adoption of a false method, resting, in default of anything better, on assumptions and theories which have been shown to be without foundation, an exaggerated scorn of tradition, and a neglect of those facts of archaeology which are the only scientific criteria we possess for testing the truth of the traditions of the past.

But within the lawful domain of philology the work of the critic has been fruitful. We have learnt much about the text of the Old Testament Scriptures which was hidden from our fathers, and above all we have come to take a truer and more intelligent view both of the text itself and

of the literature to which it belongs. We have learnt that the Old Testament Scriptures are as truly a literature as the classical productions of Greece or Rome, that they were written by men, not by machines, and that they reflect the individual qualities of those who wrote them, and the colouring of the various ages at which they were composed.

If criticism has effected nothing else, it has obliged us to look more closely into the language and relations of the books with which it deals, not to rest satisfied until we can understand the real meaning of the author and the connexion of his words with the context in which they are found. There was a time when the Christian regarded his Bible as the orthodox Hindu regards his Veda, as a single indivisible and mechanically-inspired book, dictated throughout by the Deity, and from which all human elements are jealously excluded.

But heathen theories of inspiration ought to have no place in the Christian consciousness. Christ was perfect Man as well as perfect God, and in the sacred books of our faith we are similarly called upon to recognize a human element as well as a divine. The doctrine of

verbal inerrancy is Hindu and not Christian, and if we admit it we must, with the Hindu, follow it out to its logical conclusion, that the inerrant words cannot be translated into another tongue or even committed to writing.

Nevertheless, between the recognition of the human element in the Old Testament, and the 'critical' contention that the Hebrew Scriptures are filled with myths and historical blunders, pious frauds and ante-dated documents, the distance is great. Beyond a certain point the conclusions of 'criticism' come into conflict with the articles of the Christian faith. The New Testament not only presupposes, but also rests upon the Old Testament, and, in addition to this, the method and principles which have resolved the narratives of the Old Testament into myths, or the illusions of credulous Orientals, must have the same result when applied to the New Testament. From a 'critical' point of view the miraculous birth of our Lord rests upon no better evidence than the story of the exodus out of Egypt.

'Criticism' professes not to deal with the abstract question of the possibility of miracles. But it does so indirectly by undermining the

credit of the narratives in which the miraculous is involved. In fact, the presence of a miracle is of itself accounted a sufficient reason for 'suspecting' the truth of a story, or at all events the credibility of its witnesses. If there was no record of miracles in the Old and New Testaments, it may be questioned whether so much zeal would have been displayed in endeavouring to throw doubt on the authenticity of their contents. We find no such display of 'critical' energy in the case of the Mohammedan Koran.

But putting the question of miracles aside, there is one point on which we have a right to demand a clear answer from the advocates of the 'higher criticism' who still maintain their adherence to the historical faith of Christendom. It was to the Old Testament that Christ and the early Church appealed in proof of His divinity. 'Search the Scriptures,' said our Lord, for 'they are they which testify of Me.' It was in them that the life and death, the resurrection and the work of Christ were foreshadowed and predicted (Luke xxiv. 25–27), and upon this fact He based His claim to be believed.

Was our Lord right, or must we rather

hearken to the modern 'critic' when he tells us that the endeavour to find Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament, in the sense in which Christ and His Church understood the phrase, is an illusion of the past? We cannot serve two masters; either we must believe that in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah we have a real portraiture of Christ, or else that Christ was mistaken, and that the portraiture was only read into the chapter in later days. The words of Canon Liddon in reference to the critical theory of the origin of the Pentateuch still hold good: 'How is such a supposition reconcilable with the authority of Him who has so solemnly commended to us the Books of Moses, and whom Christians believe to be too wise to be Himself deceived, and too good to deceive His creatures?'

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